

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

Eastridge Community Elementary School was built in the early 1960's to serve the residents of a newly developed subdivision in southeast Aurora, Colorado. The school opened on September 3, 1963, with 12 classrooms and 300 walk-in students. The school was extensively remodeled in 1968 to add four open-space learning areas accommodating 100 students each. In 1988, the school was again remodeled to add nine classrooms.

Over the past three decades, the Eastridge community has undergone profound change. A predominantly middle and upper-class community of single-family homes has given way to a more socially and ethnically diverse community that includes a large number of multi-family dwellings as well as government-subsidized low-cost housing units. Over the years, the student population at Eastridge has more than doubled from 450 to 730, necessitating the transition to a year-round four-track calendar in 1994.

Today, Eastridge has a minority enrollment of 37%, an average mobility rate of 40%, 73% of the students are transported to school by bus, 37% qualify for a federally subsidized free or reduced lunch program, 12% qualify for special-education services, and fifteen foreign languages are spoken by a 10% ESL population.

Despite many changes, Eastridge has not only maintained an effective educational program, but has transformed itself into one of the liveliest and most innovative K-5 learning environments in the state. Student outcomes continue to meet or exceed district and national grade-level averages, particularly in reading comprehension and in minority student achievement. Among major distinguishing features and accomplishments:

- Multi-age, straight-grade, team-taught, self-contained classrooms and looping are designed to address the diverse instructional needs and learning style of students.
- Proficiency-based curriculum, instruction and assessment.
- Assessment practices that drive instruction via the teaching-learning cycle (assessment, evaluation of assessment, planning for instruction).
- A nationally recognized, student centered library/media center.
- An instructionally effective teaching staff, (70% with Master of Arts degrees) who has a high level of expertise and understanding in: reading instruction, math manipulatives, technology, standards-based curriculum, multicultural curriculum, and performance assessment.
- Staff-initiated professional development activities, which include on-site study groups, mentoring, peer coaching, hands on workshops and the award winning **Eastridge Literacy Project**.
- An extracurricular program offering high-interest activities ranging from intramural sports to Odyssey of the Mind.
- A full array of family-centered programs and services, off-track child care, kindergarten enrichment, off-track Inter-session enrichment classes, before and after school child care, a breakfast program and family counseling and assistance services.
- Partnerships with colleges and universities, the lower business community, education reform organizations and school networks.
- Classroom-based computer network and a high level of teacher-student access to multi-media technology.
- Full inclusion of special-education students.

- Shared decision making and accountability that requires a high level of teacher, parent, and student involvement.
- Numerous awards and honors, including a DeWitt Wallace Library Power Grant, 1996 Colorado Conservation School of the Year, CCIRA Exemplary School Reading Program of the Year 1997, and Milken Award winner, principal, Dr. Villarreal.

At Eastridge, our mission is “to inspire every student to think, to learn, to achieve, to care”. The teaching and learning environment at Eastridge is vibrant, engaging, and firmly grounded in the concept of the “Helping Relationship”. It encourages a strong sense of partnership, connectedness, responsibility and collective purpose.

The faculty and parents are strongly committed to high personal and academic standards for all students. We strive to ensure that each child is well prepared for the challenges of living, working and learning in a changing world.

## VISION

Our vision/ mission is “to inspire every child to think, to learn, to achieve, to care.”

The “Helping Relationship” is the power that carries our vision/mission and the faculty forward...it shines light on the path to the future. This vision is manifested in a human culture that is committed to helping one another. It is steeped, savored, enjoyed, and celebrated. The key components of our vision entail:

- Supporting one another
- Valuing staff development
- Working collaboratively with our office staff
- Sharing instructional strategies
- Communicating and working together
- Collaborating on committees
- Valuing active parent involvement
- Demonstrating a positive attitude toward children
- Celebrating student success
- Communicating with instructional aides about children
- Encouraging students to help one another
- Valuing the media team which is integral to grade level curricula
- Depending on a child centered special services team
- Valuing everyone’s opinions
- Promoting equitable treatment of all individuals
- Demonstrating enthusiasm
- Nurturing a sense of humor
- Being committed and respectful of our parents and students

The Eastridge faculty is firmly committed to perpetuating a principle of a “Helping Relationship”. A relationship that considers others before ones self and requires servant’s heart. A servant’s heart that awakens the spirit of adventure and creates an unquenchable thirst for knowledge in the heart of every child under our collective care. The Eastridge faculty members are paradigm pioneers...people willing to adapt to change, finding new and effective ways to achieve success in a rapidly changing world, doing so in the security of a “helping Relationship.” Our convictions about excellence and the need to serve others give birth to action that will not be deterred, denied or delayed.

“Like a beacon piercing thick fog, we provide direction  
for children who are in need of inspiration and guidance”.

## **Student Focus and Support**

### **A1. How would you describe your student population? What are your students' needs? How do you assure that the needs of all students are met?**

The Eastridge student population is a microcosm of American society. The socio-economic range of our service area includes government subsidized housing through upper middle class neighborhoods. Thirty-seven percent of the population is minority, 37% receive free/reduced lunch, an average of 40% is mobile, 12% receives special education, 10% are ESL students representing fifteen languages, and 7% are advanced placement learners. The strength of diversity assures our children will learn about our culture and the world they will inherit in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Student needs at Eastridge are determined by examining multiple sources of information for each child regardless of their date of entry. Teams of personnel (grade level, special education, mental health, media, administrative, integrated arts, childcare) assist and provide teachers with information to address individualized student needs. To continue communication regarding student progress vertical and horizontal articulation among grade level teachers occurs bi-monthly. The faculty possesses a repertoire of skills and strategies that are matched to individual needs. (see D1) Senior citizens, peer tutors, high school mentors, Junior Achievement volunteers and parents are utilized to further support children. (See C3 for detailed definitions of individualized programs.)

This student population is extremely diverse academically, culturally, linguistically, economically and socially. For our diverse population, we provide a comprehensive educational and community outreach program – childcare, health care, enrichment and remedial classes, counseling, special education, Title I, advanced placement, and free/reduced lunch/breakfast program. Our mobile population demands and is provided an environment that is safe and orderly.

The state mandated accountability process is also used to identify academic concerns. Strong connections to the community, i.e. Parent Teacher Community Organization sponsored activities, business involvement, educational coalitions provide resources and support for our children. (See G1)

### **A2. What nonacademic services and programs are available to support students, and how do they relate to the student needs and school goals identified?**

The Eastridge environment provides a vibrant, engaging school culture that is firmly grounded in the concept of a “Helping Relationship”. It is a strong sense of partnership, connectedness, responsibility and collective purpose felt throughout the school and community. This “Helping Relationship” permeates non-academic programs that relate to school needs and goals. **Our school goal is to embed the “Helping Relationship” so that children are “inspired to think, to learn, to achieve, to care”.**

- The large number of working parent requests necessitated full day childcare from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Two hundred fifty students use this service throughout the year.
- Mental Health assessment results indicated that there was a need for a mentoring program. The Blazer Buddies program pair 50-60 students with high school mentors. This program targets students' at-risk of dropping out for academic or social reasons.
- A national trend reflects that more families are becoming disconnected from public schools. To extend the “Helping Relationship” to our families and to help them become more connected and involved, a parent liaison position was created and funded by district grant money, building decentralized budget and Cub Foods.
- Our community liaison became aware that there was a void of inter-generational connections within families. As a result, the “Monday Listening Center” was implemented and is available to all students during lunchtime. Senior volunteers actively listen to children needs.
- Office referrals, parent feedback and child concerns indicated that bullying was an issue. We instituted a nationally recognized “Bully Proofing” program that provides students with strategies for eliminating bullying behaviors from the school environment. (see B4)
- Increasingly, children are losing family, church, and neighborhood support systems. In response to this, a nationally recognized program entitled “Building Assets” was implemented to educate the

community at large to help rebuild these structures. Some examples of positive assets for children include: positive family communication, empowering youth to service others, being engaged in school, demonstrating integrity, planning and making decisions. The “Ideas for Partners” newsletter is distributed throughout the year to assist adults in learning about these assets.

- Care of young children is a life skill. Moreover, a large number of children baby-sit. Taught by the school nurse, a Red Cross babysitting class instructs children on caring for young children.
- Economic circumstances necessitate that the school nurse provide resources for families who need further vision, hearing, dental, and minor medical assistance.
- Parent cries for assistance and teacher concerns about children and their families emotional health indicated a clear need for Mental Health services. We presently employ a full time school psychologist and a full time social worker.

### **A3. How does your school determine and address the developmental needs of students as they move from grade to grade?**

Eastridge advocates and has adopted the National Association for the Education of Young Children developmentally appropriate practices philosophy. In determining educational programming and services, the faculty educates the whole child -- emotional, psychological, social and cognitive needs. Children are evaluated, assessed and matched to characteristics rather than chronological age. Although the NAEYC philosophy serves as a framework for educating our children, we also advocate accelerating the child and compacting the curriculum to reach pre-determined high grade level academic standards.

A two-year looping program at grades 2 and 3, and 4 and 5 provides continuity of instruction and eliminates a year of transition to a new grade level and different teacher. There is no need to conduct beginning of the year assessments or review classroom rules, policies and procedures. Parent/teacher relationships have been formed and skills groups identified.

The Eastridge experience begins with a family tour of the building. The family is oriented about school programs, academic standards, student services, extracurricular activities, school improvement goals, school facility, behavioral standards, community services and is introduced to the family liaison.

The student’s first day begins in the “Immersion Program.” The “Immersion Program” provides a small group setting for assimilating the child into the Eastridge environment (See C3).

A child’s success in school and academic achievement is inextricably tied to parental involvement. Therefore, the family liaison organizes new parent welcome nights to provide a forum where parents can ask questions about the school, learn about school programs and connect personally with Dr. Villarreal, the principal.

The English as a Second Language teacher holds an open house in the fall for students and parents. Translators are made available in an effort to provide a sense of comfort and acceptance for adults who have difficulty communicating in English.

The transition from fifth grade to middle school begins in April as students begin with a selection of classes. Activities include:

- Middle school counselors coming to Eastridge to meet with students and discuss registration materials.
- Panels of middle school students coming to answer questions.
- A Success in Middle School Program is made available for students desiring a mini-course at the middle school. The purpose is to address organizational skills, study skills and familiarity with the school facility.
- An open question forum is hosted each spring for parents to converse with middle school counselors.
- A field trip to the middle school is scheduled for fifth graders to experience a day at middle school.
- Special education teams gifted and talented teachers and classroom teachers articulate and collaborate about individual students to ease transitions.

- For incoming kindergartners, there is a spring orientation to welcome new students and families. A one on one screening conference is scheduled to provide a comfort level for children to transition to the public school setting.

**A4. What co-curricular activities are available for students and how do those activities extend the academic curriculum?**

Teacher feedback and student interest inventories guide the development and planning of co-curricular activities which are high interest, student centered and designed to “hook” children into school. Seventy percent of students participate in Eastridge co-curricular activities: choir, school store, student postal service, Jazzy Jugglers, intramural sports, Student Council, Odyssey of the Mind, opera, instrumental music, ski program, media council, Spanish classes, homework club and Eastridge television news. Offering these activities before, during and after school encourages participation. All activities are available to and participated in by boys and girls.

Co-curricular activities are publicized via the Eastridge weekly news program, school publications, class newsletters, bulletin boards, assemblies, special flyers, PTCO meetings and student performances. The co-curricular activities are designed to develop and extend skills and concepts, vocabulary, and units taught. For example, physical education activities reinforce science units such as the muscular and skeletal system, heart and lungs, health and fitness, and support drug education. Student Council introduces, reinforces and extends the social studies unit on government, civics, democracy and self-government. Mathematical concepts, higher order thinking and Gardener’s Seven Intelligence’s are developed through the Odyssey of the Mind program, instrumental music and operas. An Eagles Eye View (on-site television news) nurtures creativity, problem solving, deductive and inductive reasoning skills. Positive feedback from current and former students indicates a high degree of support for Eastridge co-curricular activities.

**A5. How does your school address the accessibility of its facilities to students and others with disabilities?**

Eastridge meets federal regulations and specifications requiring accessibility to handicapped person entrances, bathroom, steps and parking areas. Ramps to mobile classroom and buses equipped with lifts for children with physical disabilities are available. Services provided by a full time school nurse make it possible for children with medical needs such as medication or catheterization to be included in the regular classroom. We embrace the social and academic inclusion of special needs children and are committed to accepting and nurturing all students. Faculty members also participate in inservices and conferences i.e. the ADHD child, Lindamood, Slingerland training and “Educating the Dyslexic Child.”

## **SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND CULTURE**

**B1. How does the culture of your school support the learning of all its members and foster a caring community?**

The culture of Eastridge is predicated on the “Helping Relationship” which began with an off-site retreat with faculty and staff members. As a faculty we share random acts of kindness that exemplify a culture that espouses a “Helping Relationship”. The faculty unanimously agreed upon 18 principles that guide our behavior. Some examples include supporting one another; demonstrating respect and commitment to our parents and students; sharing instructional strategies; valuing everyone’s opinions. These principles are posted throughout the building and are included in the staff handbook. Principles are also shared throughout the year with the parent accountability committee and parent/teacher organization. The ubiquitous “Helping Relationship” theme is visible on publications, reinforced at faculty meetings, and modeled for children. Specific examples include

- teachers agreeing to add another child to their class load during the child’s scheduled track-off. This provides the child additional time in school.
- teachers sharing materials and resources without being asked.
- teachers viewing all children as their personal responsibility.

- teachers mentoring and coaching one another about effective instructional strategies such as Guided Reading instruction, writing process and Vygotskian theory and practice.
- teachers planning and team teaching instructional units.
- teachers regrouping their classes to meet students individualized needs.
- teachers regularly providing their colleagues with a second set of eyes to suggest alternative strategies when working with a challenging or at-risk learner.
- teachers working collaboratively to solve problems, brainstorm new ideas and offer reflective thought.

The “Helping Relationship” spills over into interpersonal relationships as colleagues help one another during family crisis, celebrations and personal needs. A philosophy of participative management has been in place for a number of years. The process begins with an identified need or idea. Dr. Villarreal then solicits input through a Leadership Team and at faculty meetings. Discussion is continued through team meetings, or an interest based AdHOC committee is formed. This committee is charged with researching, synthesizing, communicating and making recommendations to the faculty. Ideas may go through a cyclical process of reflection at this time. Pilot testing, revision, and scaling up will then occur. Outcomes of this collaborative decision making process include:

- revising the report card.
- restructuring the spelling program.
- aligning our curriculum with state standards.
- developing a building-wide master schedule and calendar.
- developing a school-wide literacy project.
- developing a process for identifying children who may fail to meet district standards.

**B2. What opportunities do students have to build sustained and caring relationships with teachers and other adults? How does your school promote a healthy peer climate among the students?**

Every effort is made to provide opportunities for students and adults to interact both on an informal basis and as a function of activities related to school goals. To build and sustain a relationship between students and adults, Eastridge provides the following:

- Teachers follow their students for two years as they progress through grades 2 and 3, 4 and 5.
- Individual counseling is initiated after referrals from teachers, parents, and administrators.
- Mental Health services sponsors several support groups including groups on divorce, loss, social skills, interpersonal relationships, academic success, and conflict resolution. The team serves 25-30 of our students.
- Grade level teaming fosters strong connections between teachers and students. Each team is a school within a school for its students and is responsible for nurturing a “Helping Relationship” that is sustained throughout the grade levels.
- One hundred percent of the faculty is involved in furthering these efforts. They:
  - sponsor extra curricular activities,
  - attend school plays, concerts, athletic events,
  - chaperone field trips,
  - sponsor homework clubs,
  - provide incentive parties for reaching high academic and behavioral standards,
  - participate in overnight field trips,
  - attend and volunteer personal time at evening family social events such as dances, ice cream socials and fund raising events.

These events allow teachers to make positive connections with students in many different settings. Students have opportunities to build relationships with adults other than teachers during the school day. Aurora policemen build a positive rapport between youth and authority figures through programs such as DARE. Volunteers tutors chaperone field trips, supervise field day events, help with classroom

projects, help locate materials in the media center, and serve as instructors at our Jump Rope for Heart Health Fair. Teacher assistants mentor students in advanced academic projects, and guest speakers are regularly featured throughout the year.

Teachers also meet with students informally before and after school and occasionally eat lunch with children. This setting allows students to engage in lively conversation about their participation in outside school activities. These out of class relationships communicate to students that their teachers are real people with their own interests and hobbies. Evidence of sustained caring relationships is demonstrated by the return of a large number of students from middle and high schools to visit and offer assistance.

A number of strategies are in place to encourage positive peer relationships. Mentioned in B4 is the Bully Proofing program. Other examples include: buddy reading, older students tutoring younger students, intermediate students assisting younger students board buses, student translators for ESL students, student translators assisting main office staff in admitting new ESL students.

Our school psychologist developed an early intervention program targeting students who are considered “at-risk”. These students are organized into gardening teams and through the spring and summer plant, cultivate and harvest a variety of flowers and vegetables. An enhanced sense of belonging and pride is sown as well, with hard work, cooperation, planning, problem solving and conflict resolution cultivated daily. Students then set up a farmer’s market as they move from class to class selling the produce they grow to peers and teachers. This garden program culminates in the students planning and executing a spaghetti dinner in honor of their parents, using the money earned and the tomatoes and herbs they harvested. In addition, through their initiative and generosity these students extend a “Helping Relationship” to the community. Recently, they donated half of their profits to an Eastridge family struck by tragedy.

### **B3. How are teachers hired in your school? How are teacher assignment made?**

Shared decision-making at Eastridge requires faculty to participate in the selection of a new teacher. Dr. Villarreal, grade level teams and/or departments meet to discuss the type of teacher that is needed to compliment the expertise, education, and experience of that team. An effort is made to recruit teachers from diverse backgrounds. Once this preliminary discussion has been completed, the district generates a printout of qualified candidates. Candidates must exemplify empathy, objectivity, rapport, gestalt, and a strong academic preparation. Teachers recruited and hired go through an extensive process of personal telephone screening, team interviews, and second interviews if necessary, and reference checks. When possible, candidates are observed in a teaching environment. It is critical that candidates have a passion for teaching and strive to achieve high standards. They must be committed to continuous staff development and demonstrate through their resume, interview, conversation and behavior that they believe in characteristics that exemplify the “Helping Relationship”.

For the benefit of children, teacher assignments are based on the teacher’s expertise, team dynamics, distribution of knowledge within a team, potential contribution, and personal strengths. For example, trained Reading Recovery teachers were assigned specifically to the language arts portion of the first grade instruction. This allows teachers to use their Reading Recovery expertise both during one on one instruction and to carry-over effective instructional reading strategies into the classroom.

Teachers are assigned with their staff development experiences in mind. Primary teachers (K-2/3) are well versed in developmentally appropriate practices and Vygotskian theory for young children. They are experts at teaching emergent readers and trained in using Early Literacy in the Classroom (ELIC) strategies. Intermediate teachers (4-5) must be knowledgeable about LLIFE strategies (Literacy in the fourth through eighth grades). Additionally, some special education teachers have requested and have been moved into the regular classroom, which serves to expedite the diagnoses of learning disabilities.

### **B4. What is your school’s plan for school safety, discipline, and drug prevention? What was your record for the past five years?**

The development of a safe environment and sense of cohesiveness for all students is paramount to a child’s learning. Consistency in standards and expectations for behavior is the foundation of school



policy. To maintain a safe and orderly environment, we have specific behavioral expectations. Eastridge adheres to the district policy of zero tolerance for drugs and weapons, defiance of authority, habitual disruption of student learning, discrimination and physical conflict. These standards are reinforced by adults, posted in highly visible areas, written in the parent-student handbook, and reviewed by Dr. Villarreal annually. If a student has a continuing problem, parents are contacted. Teachers document interventions and communicate home via written notices if they are unable to contact responsible parent/guardian. If a student remains a discipline problem after the initial parent contact, the teacher fills out a disciplinary referral form and further action is taken through the principal's office. Dr. Villarreal or Ms. Moore (assistant principal) conduct due process, parents are contacted and consequences given ranging from missing lunch/recess for offenses that are minor but repeated (talking out in class, misconduct in the bathroom). Referrals, consequences and infractions are documented in a computerized "dean referral" mainframe program. The clarity, consistency, fair policy and high standards at Eastridge contribute to the overall safety and orderliness of the building. In the past five years an average of less than 2% of students have been suspended for infractions such as fighting, racial slurs or repeated defiance and disrespect. There has been one nine-week expulsion of a child for weapons possession in the school's history.

Bully Proofing, now in its second year, encourages the prevention of violence and presents students with effective strategies to help them disarm bullies and feel safer at school or home. Effective strategies include: getting help, asserting yourself, using humor, avoiding the situation, engaging in self-talk and owning the situation. As part of the positive reinforcement, students strive to become part of the caring majority. The caring majority is a group of classroom students who exhibit "Helping Relationship" characteristics and are identified by peers. Bullies do not qualify for the caring majority, but their peers encourage them to show behaviors that will include them as part of the caring majority.

Fifth grade students participate in a 16-week Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) program which is taught by a trained police officer. The DARE officer's high visibility throughout the building and his positive interactions with children further enhances respect for and appreciation of the police. The officer also reinforces the standards of safety, orderliness and respect for one another. For grades kindergarten through four, teachers utilize the nationally acclaimed "Here's Looking at You 2000" to introduce children to the dangers of drug use and their effect on one's health, safety and livelihood. Through our Parent Teacher Community Organization, Eastridge parents are actively involved in planning and providing financial support for a National Red Ribbon Drug Awareness program, drug-awareness assemblies, and poster contests and advertising a drug free environment. Staff and students wear red ribbons to symbolize their commitment to abstaining from drugs. No student has been suspended and/or expelled for drugs, alcohol or tobacco use in the past ten years.

## **CHALLENGING STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM**

**C1. How does your curriculum serve the broad goals for student learning and development that the public generally expects education to achieve: personal and intellectual growth, citizenship, and preparation for work? What relative emphasis do you place on these goals in your curriculum?**

Eastridge's mission is "to inspire students to think, to learn, to achieve, to care" using a "Helping Relationship". Creating socially responsible citizens and leaders is a positive outgrowth of this mission. Our emphasis is reflected in activities such as Student Council, which provides students opportunities to develop their leadership, communication, problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, and awareness of the democratic processes.

For community service projects, Eastridge students organize fundraising activities and have sponsored "Save the Whales" and "Save the Rain Forest" campaigns. CARE packages have been sent to children in day care centers, homeless shelters and families who have experienced tragedies and loss in our community. In September of 1998, The Eastridge School Community raised in excess of \$12,000 cash and truckloads of furniture, clothing and food for an Eastridge family that lost their son and home to an accidental fire.

Student leadership and responsible citizenship are acknowledged and celebrated by our Very Important Citizen (VIC) program. Each semester one VIC student per classroom is selected by teachers and classmates. The VIC program encourages students to take an active role in creating a harmonious and productive learning environment.

**C2. How is your school organized to provide for differing student academic needs within the school's goals, priorities, and curriculum?**

Eastridge is focused on meeting the district's commitment to creating a flexible learning environment in which every student can grow and develop. The teaching/learning cycle - assessment, evaluation, planning, and teaching - determines academic skill groups. Components of this approach are:

- *Grade level academic standards.* Academic goals are derived from statistical analysis of test scores, student proficiency levels and input from faculty and parents. Time allocated for curricular areas is determined by the identified instructional needs of students, individually and collectively.
- *Student accountability.* Students are expected to become self-directed, responsible, respectful, independent and adaptable learners.
- *Multiple assessments.* Running Records, rubrics, teacher made tests, student projects, proficiencies, QRI-II, DRA, Levels Tests, and Colorado Standards Assessments provide bodies of evidence.
- *Looping.* Allows teachers to eliminate the nine to sixteen week transition required to learn new student names, learning styles, create cohesive class dynamics, and meet parents. Looping expedites placement of students into appropriate skill groups and maintains instructional continuity.
- *Individualized programming.* An advanced placement honors program provides for academic acceleration and compacting in grades 2 through 5. A gifted and talented resource teacher in grades K and 1 serves advanced learners.
- *Immersion.* See (C3)
- *Guided Reading practices.* Provides for fluid and flexible regrouping of students. Reading groups constantly change based on reading levels, skills needs, and student interests.
- *Year round calendar.* A year-round, four-track calendar provides opportunities to extend a child's school year by as much as 12 weeks. Each student has four three-week "track off" periods during the year. Based on student needs, students may return to school during track-off periods for skill remediation, reinforcement extension in specific curricular areas.
- *Title I and ESL.* See (C3)
- *Reading Recovery.* See C3

**C3. How do you ensure that diverse learners (for example, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, students with limited English proficiency, migrant students, and students placed at risk) all have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels?**

The faculty embraces the philosophy that the least restrictive environment best meets the needs of students. To meet diverse needs, our faculty continuously evaluates instructional strategies and placement practices. Changes made in the last three years include:

- *Honors.* The essence of the Honors Program at Eastridge is acceleration and compacting a minimum of a two-year program in one year. Our year round calendar supports this program by providing a unique opportunity. We allow and encourage Honors students to return to class during off track periods, thus providing an additional twelve weeks of classroom instruction time during the year. The effectiveness of our program is clearly demonstrated by evaluation results that indicate that Honors children scores 12 levels higher in comparison to non-Honors students who grew 8 levels. In addition, a low pupil teacher ratio and daily contact with the Honors teacher and peers of similar capabilities facilitates and further accelerated student prowess. To be placed in the Honors Program students must qualify by exemplary achievement on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (90% the percentile) and/or have the top 20 scores per grade level in Math and Reading on the district Levels Academic Placements Tests. Teacher recommendations are an integral part of placement. Once placed, the program is strenuous. Students in mathematics are expected to master pre-algebra concepts. In the language arts area, students read literature two or three years above

grade level and discuss topics in a Socratic seminar approach. Children are required to read independently one or two books per track off and submit a review, analysis, and evaluation about the text.

- *Kindergarten Enrichment.* At Eastridge a kindergarten enrichment program is available to students needing a full day program. The kindergarten enrichment teacher collaborates with the kindergarten team to identify specific skills which individual children might need. Although it is a fee-based program, children requiring enrichment and or remediation are provided this service gratis. Averages of 45% of the kindergarten enrichment children are on full scholarship. The kindergarten enrichment program provides double exposure to skills that children must master in order to meet the criteria for promotion to first grade.
- *Reading Recovery.* District policy mandates that all first graders be at grade level in reading by the end of the year. The intervention program used for at-risk readers is the internationally acclaimed New Zealand Reading Recovery program. In its fourth year at Eastridge, the Reading Recovery program serves the lowest 27% of first grade readers identified by Maria Clay's Observation Survey and Concepts of Print assessment. Four Reading Recovery teachers provide individualized reading instruction for a period of 16-20 weeks 30 minutes per day. Evidence of program success is demonstrated by the children's ability to read at level 16, which is the standard for being a proficient reader.
- *Immersion.* The purpose of the "Immersion" program is to address deficit academic skills of our at-risk mobile student population (18% in 1990-1996 to 47% in 1997-98) who concomitantly have lower academic achievement (16% lower than their continuing peers on the ITBS). "Immersion" teachers administer a battery of grade level assessments in math, reading and writing to identify the proficiency and skill levels of new students. Classroom teachers receive diagnostic academic profiles for each new student. Academically proficient students are immediately assigned to a classroom. Students identified with deficit academic skills are serviced in small instructional groups and receive four and one-half hours of intensive daily instruction for a maximum of 20 school days. The instructional goal is to scaffold students to skill levels that enable them to successfully assimilate into the classroom setting. Continuity of instruction is maintained by minimizing the disruption caused by a steady stream of new students. New students also spend 35 minutes per day with the school social worker or psychologist who acculturate them to the high academic standards and behavioral expectations at Eastridge. In this setting new children are able to share personal fears and anxieties about being in a new school. Pre and post evaluations indicate this program's effect on achievement is significant. Using the Reading Recovery scale of leveled books, primary children improved an average of eight levels in twenty days. Intermediate children (grades 3-5) improved a full grade level in reading as evidenced by individual reading inventories. Mastery of math facts increased by 50% for primary and intermediate students. One hundred forty students were tested and served in our "immersion" program during school year 1997-98.
- *Special Education.* Students are placed in special education programs through a formal staffing process. Students are assessed in five areas: educational, psychological, communicative, social, and physical, using formal standardized tests and observations. A teacher or parent may refer a student for testing at any time during the year. Special education students are serviced by a team, which includes learning disabilities specialists, social worker, school psychologist, occupational, and physical therapist, speech pathologist, nurse, and vision specialist. The special education team collaborates with the classroom teacher to develop an individual education plan, adapt curriculum, assignments, instructional strategies and to modify assessments. Depending on student need, services may occur in the regular classroom or children may receive pullout resource help.
- *Title I.* Second through fifth grade children scoring in the lowest quartile on the ITBS or who are identified as pre-basic/basic in reading or math are recommended for services in Title I. Additional pre tests are administered to determine the most severe needs. These children are taught in small groups or in individualized tutoring programs, which may occur through pull out or a teaming

situation within the regular classroom. The Title I teacher serves as a resource and consultant to the classroom teacher to model effective reading and comprehension strategies. One hundred twenty students annually receive Title I interventions. Exceeds state-required indices thereby indicating the effectiveness of the program.

- *ESL.* The English as a Second Language program is in its first year at Eastridge and services 67 children K-5. ESL children bring to us 15 languages. ESL students meet with the ESL teacher 45 minutes to one hour per day. ESL classes focus on reading, writing, and speaking skills. Students are identified using oral and written tests. Students are integrated into the regular classroom for the remainder of the day for language immersion. As they are linguistically able, they are required to complete regular classroom work. When applicable, schoolwork is adapted to their language proficiency. The school media specialist continues to expand a collection of foreign language books. An added benefit of our ESL program is the provision of foreign language translators to facilitate communication and involve parents.
- *Gifted and Talented Education.* Gifted and talented programming meets the needs of the advanced learner, grades k-5, and compliments the Honors Program for grades 2-5. Challenging materials and effective instructional strategies specific to high performing students are used such as compacting, acceleration and differentiated pacing. Students meet with the Gifted and Talented teacher four days a week to explore areas of passion. The foundation of the Gifted and Talented program is built on higher level questioning techniques, problem solving, creativity and critical thinking. Students are formally identified in their third grade year using multiple validations - CoGAT scores, teacher recommendation, parent recommendation, Renzulli's Learning Styles Inventory. Learning plans must be collaboratively developed with parents, teachers and the Gifted and Talented resource teacher. Identified children are provided extended opportunities in Saturday Challenge school.
- *Intersession.* Off track Intersession classes provide enrichment as well as remedial academic courses. Based on teacher recommendation, children receive partial or full scholarship to encourage their attendance in the reading, writing and math areas.

The interdependency of faculty and their commitment to the principle of a "Helping Relationship" ensures that children do not fall through the cracks but meet challenging standards regardless of their diverse needs. The faculty embraces the district policy that all children will be proficient in their mastery of the Eastridge curriculum. Any child who is pre-basic or basic in reading, writing or math, must have an individualized learning plan. This is written in collaboration with his/her parent. This specifies an action plan to help the child reach the proficient level.

**C4. Successful schools offer all students opportunities to be engaged with significant content.**  
**How does your school ensure that students achieve at high levels in the core subjects?**

Eastridge has proficiencies aligned with district and state standards that address the core subject areas. What makes Eastridge unique is how it has chosen to implement these proficiencies. As the 1997-98 recipient of the Colorado Council for the International Reading Association Exemplary Reading Program Award, the Eastridge Faculty acknowledges the critical importance of effective reading instruction as the primary vehicle for curriculum integration and implementation. The unique and effective feature of our curriculum is that reading instruction is the sine qua non of mastering core area content. The Eastridge faculty made a commitment to select, purchase and teach with expository literature to support grade level science and social studies units.

Thinking and reading comprehension strategies compliment one another. Using metacognitive strategies, students learn to explain cause and effect relationships, identify consistent and contradictory statements, ideas or underlying assumptions, analyze and evaluate relationships and form generalizations. Students compare, analyze and judge the logic of arguments and are expected to communicate their thoughts either verbally or in a written response. They assess the accuracy of a hypothesis and the evidence used to support them. These higher thinking skills enable students to develop new ideas, make sound choices, make better decisions and understand the world around them.

Reading skills and metacognitive reading comprehension strategies learned during a daily language arts block are reinforced and used across all content areas. These strategies include “Post it reading” which has students place sticky notes on text to promote comprehension. For example:

- R for Reminds me
- ? - I wonder
- P - I predict
- PO - sounds like poetry
- V - I can visualize
- C - I need clarification
- L - I learned
- Smiley Face - I Liked

P. David Pearson and Jan Doles’ comprehension strategies are used to enhance comprehension in fiction and non-fiction genres. They are:

- calling upon background knowledge,
- self questioning and making inferences,
- monitoring comprehension
- using fix-up strategies,
- determining what is important in text,
- reading with fluency,
- creating visual pictures in the mind, and
- synthesizing and extending information

Guided reading groups are utilized to match children with appropriate expository and/or narrative books. Students then have the opportunity to demonstrate their use of comprehension strategies while learning curricular content and concepts and developing thinking skills. Children respond to text and independently reading.

The language arts curriculum is based on the integration of skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The district standards address each of these language arts areas. Teachers seek a balance of teacher directed and student directed experiences in writing and literature. Student proficiency in reading is enhanced by a comprehensive spiral reading program. Multiple validations are used to designate proficiency levels for each student includes ITBS scores, district levels tests, QRI-II assessments, running records, student performance and teacher anecdotal notes.

Students experience a variety of literary experiences: independent reading, shared reading, partner reading, read aloud, guided reading groups, individualized reading instruction, whole group mini-lessons, reciprocal teaching groups, books on tape and living books on computer. The teacher as a facilitator monitors the pace and provides instruction in these formats.

- **Pre-reading** - students select reading materials from numerous reference sources and genres. They identify the purpose for reading, preview text structures, predict outcomes based on the text preview, review for prior knowledge and identify the meaning of words that are crucial to understanding the selection (reading to, with, and by)
- **During reading** - students interact with the text by decoding (rapidly, accurately and automatically). Students then confirm or reject predictions, self monitor when comprehension attempts are succeeding or failing; select appropriate strategies to increase comprehension and recall; use vocabulary in context to gain meaning from the text; engage in inductive and deductive reasoning and develop fluency
- **Post-reading** - Using higher level thinking, students focus their thoughts transform concepts and generate new ideas. Students demonstrate their ability to analyze printed text, organize concepts, sequence, paraphrase, categorize, summarize, retell, evaluate, make connections between what is known and what is not known and explore complex concepts. They do this through class discussions, reading circles discussion, question and answer relationship, reciprocal teaching, double entry diaries, peer questioning, and through cross grade level mentoring. Written responses, oral reading and daily silent reading further enhance comprehension. To extend language arts beyond the classroom students participate in reading incentive programs which include Pizza Hut Book It program, Accelerated Reading Program, Caldecott and the Newbery Program and specific classroom goals for number of books and pages read. It is a routine practice to send books home with students. Book bags may be checked out from the media center for home reading which includes thinking questions that parents may ask their children to enhance comprehension.

On a daily basis, every classroom enjoys a sustained silent reading period. Motivation to read is also enhanced by pairing students in a reading buddy system for cross age level peers or by reading one on one with a parent or senior volunteer. A school improvement goal requires every child to read a minimum of 20 minutes each night, including vacation track off time.

**Writing** - Research is clear that the more students read, the better writers they become. Writing is a tool for learning as well as communicating and is crucial to the study of all content areas. The writing process at Eastridge includes pre-writing, drafting, sharing, revising, editing, publishing, and self-evaluation. Eastridge children wrote and professionally published their own “Student Treasure” book. Writing instruction is purposefully planned to address six elements: Idea and content, organizational, voice, word choice, sentence structure and writing conventions. Writing is evaluated by using schoolwide writing rubrics and standards. Examples of student writing include: technical writing, personal writing, and journaling in core curriculum areas, research projects, notetaking, poetry, and book reports.

**Listening and Speaking** - Listening and Speaking are taught across the curriculum. Students demonstrate their knowledge and skills through oral presentations in science and social studies, oral direction sequences in technology, interviews and performances in speeches, dramas and plays.

**Math** - District math proficiencies (see below) and math strands included in the National Council of Teacher of Mathematics also have supporting text to reinforce and extend comprehension of math concepts in addition to computation and problem solving. The instruction focuses on developing mathematical power for all students through experiences of a broad curriculum. Exploration in problem solving and logical reasoning drives the curriculum and there is an expectation of strong communication and writing skills through math journaling. All instruction has the goal of increasing student proficiency in using and communicating reasoning in four math proficiency categories: (1) number and number relationships, geometry and measurement (3) probability and statistics (4) patterns and function and Algebra. Students have access to a broad range of technological support in the math studies. Math programming emphasizes the use of manipulatives at all grade levels particularly during the introduction of new skills. As each concept is introduced and developed, students move to the following levels. (1) concrete - physical models, blocks, cubes, rods, sticks (2) semi-concrete - pictures, graph paper and (3) symbolic - numerals, letters. Problem solving is embedded in each lesson to enhance the development of critical and higher order thinking. A Scott Foresman math series provides a common textbook strand. Math skill groups are fluid and flexible at all grade levels as students master concepts. Other resources include: Marilyn Burns math instruction, Lane County Problem Solving, Computer assisted math instruction, Touch Math, Box it Bag It, Math Their Way, and integration of math with PE, music, and art instruction. The goal is not only to enhance learning but to also empower students to be more inventive and flexible in their explorations.

Instruction includes appropriate strategies in the use of technological tools. Tools available to all students include calculators, graphing, computers both in the classroom and lab, network software for instruction that is specifically delineated in the Eastridge Curriculum guide.

**Science** - Grade level expository texts further reinforce that reading is critical and integrated with all subject matters. The science curriculum emphasizes the acquisition of concepts, the use of scientific tools, and the application of scientific method. Curriculum in science has been standardized district wide. Grade level benchmarks and authentic assessments for each unit of study evaluate student mastery of science concepts. Technology is incorporated through the use of interactive software programs. For example, the classroom use of laser discs which compliments the learning styles of the elementary child. Teachers at each grade level integrate science into interdisciplinary units. For example, the second grade has developed a habitats unit to include math and science skills and requires children to make habitat panoramas to incorporate reading, writing and oral presentation. A fourth grade unit on the solar system has students making estimation about miles traveled, temperature and life forms on other planets. Teachers have students reading science fiction books to further integration of reading into the content area. Science units include:

- Kindergarten – Food and health habits; looking at animals and plants; identification of natural resources; seasons; introduction to light, heat and sound;
- First Grade – Nutrition; comparison of living/non-living things; air, water and land; solids, liquids, gases; and interaction of matter: magnets and other objects;
- Second Grade – Sensory systems and stages of growth; growth and habitat of plants and animals; life's dependence on natural resources; sky observations; light, heat and sound
- Third Grade – Health and hygiene; classification and adaptation of plants and animals; use and conservation of natural resources; weather patterns; matter and its changes
- Fourth Grade – Nutrition, human body, systems: skeletal, muscular, digestive; rocks and minerals; the solar system; simple machines/force, motion and relative position of objects
- Fifth Grade – Human body systems; reproductive, circulatory, respiratory; interaction of plants and animals; atmosphere: weather and climate; sources and resources of energy

**Social Studies** - History and geography are the foundation of the social studies curriculum. Kindergartners study “my place in the world,” first grade – “families near and far”, second grade – “neighborhoods and communities”, third grade – “cities around the world and American Indians”, fourth grade – “Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region”, and fifth grade - significant events in early US history/US physical features. The grade levels are linked by a thematic approach that focuses on tradition and change, organization of societies, human diversity, global perspective and participatory citizenship. The curriculum is aligned with state content standards. Students are held accountable for both conceptual and factual knowledge. As examples of third grade cities unit, all students must demonstrate an understanding of the elements of a city by producing a model of a city, which include transportation, residential, business, government, hospitals, parks, and recreation. They must also be able to discuss and orally present the different elements of a city. Writing, researching and reading about those elements through literature are important components of the program. At each grade level, expanding students’ thinking skills is a priority. Students are asked to distinguish between fact and opinion, analyze cause and effect, and determine the roots of historical movements. Guest speakers and field trips enrich student experiences in social studies and science units.

**The Arts** - Students K-5 participate in —performing and visual arts, which reinforce, enrich and extend the core curriculum. Through music and art, children learn about world cultures, mathematics, experience literature, and history. Our arts curriculum supports current research linking arts education with brain development and progress in reading and math. Teachers collaborate to coordinate the curriculum units with music and art. For example the study of Japan in first grade is extended beyond the classroom through the teaching of Japanese songs in music and Japanese brush paintings of kimonos in art. See special emphasis area for more exciting and creative examples of how the arts integrate into core curriculum units. (See Section VI)

**Foreign Language** - While foreign language is not offered during regular student contact hours, the PTCO sponsors foreign language instruction before and after school (Spanish). Instructors use kinesthetic techniques, games, and hands on art projects to teach basic vocabulary. An average of 40 -

60 students participate on a voluntary basis. The program is tuition based however scholarships are provided by the PTCO. It is worth mentioning that we are very fortunate that students in our school are constantly exposed to many different languages in the regular classroom on a daily basis due to our large multicultural ESL population (15 languages).

**C5. What other content areas play essential roles in your school-wide curriculum goals?**

The Eastridge library media program is based on a philosophy of providing educational partnerships for all members of the school community, including students, faculty, administrators, staff and parents. This philosophy supports and exemplifies the “Helping Relationship”. The goal of the media program is to create a flexible learning environment in which opportunities are provided for each student to develop an inquisitive approach to learning. The primary goal is to assist students in becoming discriminating consumers of ideas and information, and to ensure their commitment to informed decision making and lifelong learning.

The media team and classroom teachers collaborate, plan and design an integrated standards based curriculum. The media curriculum provides students with 1) access to a wide range of resources and 2) a variety of skills and strategies for effectively locating, analyzing, interpreting and communicating information (See D3).

At Eastridge, physical education is a vital and integral part of the educational process. The growth and development of children is nurtured by a program that reinforces curricular units, emphasizes movement, skill development and understanding of fitness and lifetime sports. Physical education of primary children emphasizes the development of basic skills needed for coordination and physical fitness. Third, fourth and fifth graders work on coordination and physical fitness as well as learning individual, dual and team sports. Students learn responsibilities inherent to teamwork and the self-discipline needed to play on their own.

Physical education supplements the core curriculum. As an example, basic math functions are reinforced through a bowling unit, which requires student to multiply and add scores for a game. The skeletal system is reinforced through gross and fine motor development. Fitness is the major component of our physical education program. It includes:

- The Physical Best Fitness Education which assesses the physical development of each child. Results of the assessment guide individualized fitness plans for each student.
- The before-and-after-school intramural program, which extends physical education units taught during the school day, provides an opportunity for students to develop and individualize their competitive skills as well as reinforce team sports and activities. Intramurals also serve as an incentive for at-risk students, to participate in before-and-after-school activities at no cost.
- The school’s Heart Health Fair reinforces the health and science curriculum by teaching students about nutrition, safety, anti-smoking programs, aerobic exercise and fire safety.

**C6. What requirements must be satisfied before a student is promoted to the next grade or level of school?**

District proficiencies and state content standards define what students must know and master at three exit grades (5, 8 and 12). Additionally students must achieve and demonstrate grade level benchmarks in reading, writing, speaking, listening, geometry, probability, statistics, math computation and problem solving to be promoted. Teachers use bodies of evidence, including standardized tests, informal assessments, projects, QRI-II, Running Records, Flynt Kooder, Levels Tests, level books, anecdotal records and student portfolios to place students at the pre-basic, proficient or advanced levels.

“Red-flagging” of students who are at-risk of failing the proficiencies requires that teachers meet with parents and support staff to collaboratively develop an individualized learning plan. Collectively they formulate a plan to help the child reach the proficient level. Alternative instructional interventions include Saturday classes, loss of elective, double reading/math classes, remaining in elementary school for an additional semester, or extending the middle-school experience to four years.

At Eastridge, school staff and parents collectively determine expectations and improvement goals. Reporting systems such as parent conferences, student-led conferences, weekly and daily contracts, and personal telephone calls help guarantee that student, parents, and teachers are informed about standards.



**C7. What is the process for continuous curriculum renewal at your school? What questions about curriculum is your school currently addressing?**

The district motto of “Dedicated to Excellence” guides our efforts to provide students a world-class curriculum through enhanced core curriculum, the introduction of pre-algebra at the elementary level, and that no child would be below basic in the language arts and mathematics curricular areas. The Eastridge faculty annually analyzes and evaluates student achievement from data provided by standardized tests, district levels results, state standards, percentage of students at each quartile, an item analysis of sub-tests, scores below the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile and specific cohort group averages (Honors students, G&T, Title I, Special Education, Immersion, Reading Recovery, Test Wiseness).

Grade level representatives form our curriculum committee that annually evaluates one of the core curriculum areas. The process includes a review of effective curricular practices, review of literature, and development of a comprehensive staff development program as identified by faculty needs. Faculty is expected to participate in staff development. Faculty curriculum experts lead our on-site staff development and procure college credit. Evaluation procedures, which include parental feedback, summative and formative student assessments determine the effectiveness of our strategic plan. District schools who exceed expected growth on standardized tests in targeted curriculum areas are asked to share their curriculum and instructional strategies.

Every four years, the Eastridge curriculum is compared and contrasted to revised state standards, national curriculum goals, and curriculum innovations and trends. As a result of this process, the Eastridge faculty developed a comprehensive curriculum guide for language arts and mathematics in 1994-95 and completed a thorough revision in 1997-98. Eastridge uses district and state guidelines as benchmarks and expects to exceed these standards. The Eastridge Curriculum Guide identifies, organizes and articulates grade level objectives for teachers. Each objectives is “introduced”, “developed,” and “mastered”. Unique features include the delineation of standardized test objectives (underlined), and denotation of objectives with corresponding software applications.

To communicate curriculum improvement, parent evenings are hosted to educate and inform parents (we average 90% or better turn out) about revisions, assessments and standards. Further, at parent-teacher conferences, each teacher again reviews and highlights curricular changes; shares new achievement standards such as homework, skill objectives, required student projects; new materials; and assessment and rubric criteria.

The positive impact on students is demonstrated in their unprecedented high achievement on the ITBS standardized test scores, (see H4) Curriculum is accelerated based on individual needs of students and children are introduced to the succeeding grade curriculum by the end of the current grade. Students are provided several options for meeting minimum standards – grade level promotion, curriculum compacting, and reassignment to the next grade level for a daily block of specific curriculum instruction and individual tutoring.

**D. ACTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**D1. How are teaching practices and learning experiences in your school consistent with current knowledge about successful teaching and learning?**

The Skillful Teaching framework includes 16 parameters which summarize virtually all the decisions, actions and situations that teachers have to handle with students in the classroom. They are: attention, momentum, expectations, personal relationship building, discipline, clarity, principles of learning, space, time, procedural routines, models of teaching, learning experiences, dimensionality, objectives, evaluation, and organization. Key concepts of the skillful teaching framework are:

- **MATCHING:** Eastridge teachers have changed from predominantly whole group instruction to small group and direct instruction to ensure that individualization and matching of instruction occurs. i.e. Guided reading groups, Reading Recovery, fluid and flexible skill groups.
- **COMPREHENSIVENESS:** Teachers collect a variety of data on student performance – individual reading inventories and numerous running records, authentic assessments in each core curriculum area which includes writing about their learning, observation, work samples, student

products, paper and pencil tests, interviews, conferences, oral tests, self evaluations, reports, surveys, parent feedback, and peer evaluation.

- **REPertoire:** Teachers refer to 24 principles of learning to expand their repertoire and to make lessons efficient and effective. Several examples from the 24 principles include: application in setting (students practice new behaviors in setting where they will be used) i.e. using percentages to compute a discount for a pair of tennis shoes. Active Participation (students are operating, responding, moving and talking during the course of learning experiences) i.e. cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring, cross grade level mentoring. Keeping student open and thinking, (teachers respond to student answers in a way to effect them to open up, feel confident, curious and encouraged to participate, search, scan, wonder about, reflect and in general **think**) i.e. wait time, asking student to elaborate on answers, redirect to another student.

Evidence of Skillful Teaching practices is found in formally observed lesson scripts completed by administration. Administration and teaching staff routinely use the Skillful Teacher language as the basis for refining and improving professionalism and craftsmanship. The final and desired outcome of using the SkillfulTeacher is to increase student achievement.

## **D2. In what ways do your teaching practices support student initiated learning?**

Eastridge teachers consistently model and communicate, “all students can learn, I won’t give up on you, and you can do it!” Our teaching practices are congruent with activities that require the child to become independent and self-initiated learners i.e. set personal and group goals, brainstorm activities to reach predetermined goals, problem solve, research topics of interest within required units, implement idea and self-evaluation. Student initiated learning is constructed from the students’ point of view. K-W-L’s (what do we know, what do we want to know and what did we learn). KWL’s are routinely used to begin units. Thus teachers effectively determine where instruction should begin. Children have choices via learning centers. Extrinsic incentives are provided to motivate children to go beyond classroom instruction i.e. Caldecott/Newbery awards math medals, and optional homework assignments. Technology software in the classroom allows children to choose programs that compliment his/her learning style. An open and flexible media schedule is user friendly and children access literature and multi-media resources of their choice, depending on their personalized instructional need. Self-reflection logs and metacognitive strategies empower students to reflect on their own thinking. Students are taught to work independently while teachers are engaged in small group instruction. Student input helps to determine evaluation procedures and rubrics, thereby identifying their knowledge and what additional skills need to be taught to increase achievement. Student-led conferences, scheduled each spring complete the learning-cycle for children as they report growth and progress to parents and significant others in their families. To enhance self-initiated learning children, participate in Student Council where they plan and implement community projects. Additionally, students learn effective leadership practices and behavioral characteristics of effective leaders.

## **D3. How are resources made available to teachers and students for gathering information and sharing the results of their efforts?**

The media team comprised of media specialist, Gifted and Talented teacher, technology specialists, and Intersession teacher lead the Eastridge efforts to gather curriculum and instructional information. They share, plan and assist teachers in utilizing media resources. This model has enhanced curriculum integration and articulation of effective instructional strategies.

The media program is inextricable to the success, effectiveness, and implementation of a positive learning environment at Eastridge. Teachers are required to meet with the media team on track-on day (every nine weeks) to design and plan content area activities and design evaluation procedures which measure achievement of state standards and district proficiencies/curriculum. The media specialist is an in-school staff developer.

It is the responsibility of the media team to teach students information skills to empower them to become independent learners. The media center operates an open and flexible schedule allowing access to information resources throughout the day. Baseline data indicates approximately 650 students access information sources each week for a variety of curricular and instructional purposes such as using

Internet, creating electron portfolios, gathering information, synthesizing knowledge, and using technology to produce reports. Students also access the media to check out books for leisure reading, while others are identifying and selecting resources needed for unit reports. The library reflects the dynamic atmosphere of the school – a place where students are actively engaged in reading, discussing relevant issues, questioning one another, and researching problems.

**D4. What technology applications are you using? How do they relate to your curricular goals and how do they support teaching and learning?**

Via the Apply Solutions package, teachers access technology, which supports curriculum objectives. The Solutions packages are a collection of the “best” software based on studies conducted by the Apple Company. These programs include simulation software, drill and practice programs, reference CD’s, multimedia books, productivity programs, and critical thinking applications. Apple applications are aligned with the Eastridge curriculum scope and sequence of skills. The integration of technology with curriculum and instruction is planned during collaboration meetings. Collaboration techniques and strategies are developed through on-site staff development. Teachers sign up for one-on-one assistance to learn specific programs, or to participate in an after-school technology study group devoted to increasing staff aptitude and compliance in technology. The technology staff also has a flexible schedule, and computer technicians work with students in the classroom setting. This small group process is invaluable for teacher planning and ultimately for students as they are introduced to and utilize technology.

**E. PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY**

**E1. What opportunities do teachers and other staff have to build professional community that enhance their collective capacity to work together to support student learning.**

The Eastridge faculty is organized into independent and interdependent teams of teachers. This “flat” organizational model maximizes collegiality, open communications, implementation of innovative practices, teaming, sharing of materials, and collaborative problem solving. A leadership team consisting of representatives from each school team meets bi-monthly with Dr. Villarreal to collectively set goals, discuss critical educational issues, brainstorm ideas, and develop school-wide initiatives. Topics the leadership team has discussed and brought closure to have been: a new spelling program, PEBC Writing Project (primary team), Read-Write Connection (K-5), Guided Reading (3-5), implementation of effective instructional strategies, school wide public relations strategies, budget allocation, staffing allocations, building policies pertaining to student behavior, parental concerns, organizational restructuring, textbook purchases, staff design, parent surveys, and Dr. Villarreal’s annual performance objectives,

Grade level teams and vertical grade level families (K-5) meet periodically to articulate curriculum continuity and instructional strategies that effectively impact standardized tests. The school day provides fifty-five minutes of non-student contact time before school and thirty minutes after school to discuss issues raised at leadership meetings, grade level meetings, curriculum meetings, and AdHOC meetings. One morning a week is designated as grade-level planning time. Vertical families meet twice a month to collaborate about student achievement, assessments, vertical alignment of curriculum, instruction, and reorganizing children in appropriate instructional groups. Teachers have a 45-minute planning period each day. Teachers are frequently provided release time from the building to participate in professional study groups, plan curriculum, and set programming goals for gifted and talented and ESL students, study Vygotskian theory, attend PEBC workshops, and to plan for site study groups.

**E2. How does a coherent approach to professional development for teachers and other staff ensure their ability to implement effectively the school’s curriculum, instructional strategies and support system? How do organizational arrangements, such as time and teaching assignments, and school norms and culture, make professional development a priority?**

Sometimes referred to as “The University of Eastridge” by faculty, we view the professional growth and development of the teaching staff as the sine qua non of our success. The major components of our staff development program are:

- A building staff development and professional library account of fourteen percent of the decentralized school budget (\$14,000). The allocated funds target school improvement goals and

teacher-identified needs for each year. Staff development expenditures “buys” release days for workshops, pays conference registration fees, pays substitute costs, and purchases professional books and reference materials.

- A district evaluation program which promotes personal and professional improvement plans. Teachers are expected to identify, plan and initiate a professional growth plan each year.
- Eastridge teachers initiate, organize and participate in on-site professional study groups, which offer university credit toward recertification. Topics studied in the past eight years have been Reading Recovery, Gardner’s Seven Intelligence’s, Skillful Teacher, and proficiencies implementation. Study groups average 24 participants from a faculty of 36.
- The Eastridge faculty is in the final year of the Eastridge Literacy Project, an on-site, progressive, and research-based literacy program utilizing effective reading practices. As a result of this intensive study of reading instruction, Eastridge was the recipient of the **1997-98 Exemplary Reading Program in the state of Colorado** and first time recipient in the district.
- Faculty members aggressively pursue professional growth opportunities offered by the Colorado Department of Education, the National Staff Development Network, colleges and universities, private research organizations and private consultants.
- Eastridge is frequently requested as a site for placing student teachers and administrative interns. A number of student teachers, college interns and teachers from other districts are “in residence” at Eastridge throughout the year.
- The Public Education and Business Coalitions has assisted and guided our efforts to restructure the library/media center. The media center and the media specialist were designated as a lab school for media/teacher collaboration in implementing a standards based curriculum.
- The Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL) has taught Power Teaching Modules addressing the diverse learner and has used our site in a pilot study of exceptional schools. The Cherry Creek School District selected Eastridge as a site for implementing the Vygotsky theory of learning and the Reading Recovery program.
- Currently, we are under contract with the PEBC to train our primary teachers in the writing process. A district staff developer has been purchased by building staffing allocation to teach expository writing to teachers in grades 3-5, and an Eastridge staff member and a district staff developer co-coach 24 faculty members in Guided Reading.

Our rapidly changing society requires a concomitant change in the structure processes and methods of how we educate children to prepare them for the 21st century. Dramatic demographic changes, the increasing division between socio-economic groups, children’s health and safety issues, and the increasing lack of basic skills by entering students requires our Eastridge faculty to be well prepared to confront these issues. To this end, the school will encourage and support professional growth such as awareness of multiculturalism, sensitivity to issues related to diversity, and knowledge of progressive and innovative curriculum and instructional methods. To achieve this goal, staff development will continue to be the foundation for accomplishing our mission of inspiring all children to learn, to think, to achieve and to care.

### **E3. How does the school tailor professional development and support to take account of differences in career experience or professional responsibility?**

New teachers are provided a mentor teacher whose responsibility is to provide curricular, instructional and personal support. The district provides a Staff Training and Review (STAR) consultant to serve as a professional mentor, confidante and assist in developing curriculum units, suggest classroom management techniques, provide strategies for enhancing parent/teacher/student relations, and implementing effective assessment strategies.

Our new faculty members are introduced to the staff at the first faculty meeting. Dr. Villarreal gives a brief educational background and biography of the teacher, presents him or her with a Cherry Creek Coffee Mug and Eastridge lapel pin. Each new member is requested to sing his or her high

school fight song. This unique icebreaker serves as an invitation to join our Eastridge family and is enjoyed by all.

To tailor professional development and account for differences in career experiences, teachers, specialists and administrators identify their professional improvement plans. Linking background experiences with school goals, they are offered staff development courses, class release time to observe colleagues, stipends to cover educational costs and professional literature. Faculty curriculum experts lead special interest topical study groups to “bring along” and develop teachers (see F1, paragraph 2). Study groups have included ELIC and LLIFE classes, Reading Assessment study groups, Running Records, QRI-II, DRA, Levels Tests, Skillful Teacher, and Test Wiseness.

All teachers are allowed and encouraged to accept challenging, new teaching assignments. Faculty members have made dramatic grade level changes; have moved from special education to the regular classroom, have left the classroom to become ESL instructors; have developed and implemented an Immersion Program; and have organized a private enterprise Intersession Program. As with teachers new to our district, these professionals are provided with monetary and professional development support.

Support staff, including para-professionals are afforded professional growth opportunities and financial support to develop and enhance their abilities to work with children. Support staff have participated in technology workshops, SuPR Reading Program, Resiliency Conference, Bully Proofing, Time Management Courses, and Coping with ADHD and autistic children.

**E4. How does your school use the processes and results of student assessment, staff evaluation, and school review to support professional growth? How has teacher professional development improved teaching and resulted in higher student achievement and success?**

The primary purpose of the staff evaluation process is to improve instruction. It is an integral part of the learning cycle and a critical element for the attainment of educational goals. Teachers are evaluated in accordance with the district’s Certificated Personnel Performance Evaluation Act. Evaluations are based on the districts six performance standards: knowledge of content, classroom management, instruction, assessment, student relations, professional and community relations, and setting professional and personal objectives. Evaluation may include anecdotal records, informal observations and feedback from colleagues, parents, and students. This comprehensive evaluation process is linked directly to student achievement.

Administration also provides an induction program orienting new faculty to school goals, staff development initiatives, assessment strategies, communication with parents, and effective instructional strategies derived from Jon Saphier’s Skillful Teacher.

Formal observations provide each teacher with a script of their teaching, which includes lesson presentation and student responses. The post-observation feedback conference gives the teacher an opportunity to analyze, evaluate, and challenge administrator observations of the teaching learning process. Further, suggestions for enhancing the teaching learning process are discussed, mutually agreed upon, and ideas for future professional growth are explored. Colleagues can also assist in supporting one another to improve student achievement by participating in alternative evaluation processes. These processes include the integrated peer collaboration model, a professional portfolio model, implementation of a research-based instructional program model, a study group model and a self-reflection model.

Student assessment data is analyzed, synthesized, and discussed with the faculty. Not only are successes celebrated and analyzed, but also significant areas of low achievement are highlighted and analyzed for cause. This process is seen as an opportunity to better meet our students’ needs. Moreover, changes in instructional strategies are suggested, researched and implemented. Based on these results of student assessments, targeted areas become individual, school wide, and/or grade level professional growth goals. An example of this analysis of student assessment results is in the area of reading instruction. ITBS scores indicated a school wide need to improve reading comprehension. As a result, the faculty embarked on a three-year professional growth project entitled The Eastridge

Literacy Project. The impact of this professional development improved teaching and enhanced student achievement.

The Eastridge Parent Accountability Committee is mandated to determine three improvement goals. This annual school review process (see F3) has identified long and short term student achievement targets by analyzing test data. For example, spelling achievement was identified as a school wide weakness. The faculty therefore, began a year long study of research based best practices for spelling. As a result of this effort, children have increased their mastery of core word lists and have begun to use spelling words correctly in their writing.

Our school recognized excellent teaching through numerous activities held throughout the year. To recognize and acknowledge teachers:

- We celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Day ,
- We present The Eastridge Golden Eagle Award – which honors leadership, risk-taking and innovation (presented three times a year by a vote of the faculty),
- Parents nominate faculty members for the Colorado Teacher of the Year Award which acknowledges exemplary professionalism and contributions to the field of education,
- Teachers are nominated by parents for The Cherry Creek Teachers Award,
- At faculty meetings, teachers honor one another for demonstrating the “Helping Relationship”,
- On non-pupil contact days, administration provides a lunch for the faculty’s “Dedication to Excellence”,
- Faculty members receive lapel pins representing local and national educational initiatives,
- Parents host teacher appreciation breakfasts.

## **F. LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATIONAL VITALITY**

### **F1. How does leadership move your school toward its vision/mission? How is the instructional leadership role defined and implemented? How are resources aligned with goals?**

Dr. Villarreal, our principal, fervently advocates that faculty members accept roles of leadership to design and implement an organizational model that encourages, supports and empowers them to strive for excellence. Educational excellence at Eastridge must ensure that every child be inspired “to think, to learn, to achieve, to care”. Dr. Villarreal begins by having a servant’s heart that promotes a collective vision of a culture founded in the “Helping Relationship”. Principles of a “Helping Relationship” provide diverse opportunities to lead, share, cooperate, interact and solve problems. (See Vision Statement) The question that is consistently asked by school leaders is, “Are our efforts in the best interests of children?” Every decision must effect student achievement.

To achieve our vision/mission, Dr. Villarreal encourages faculty members to assume leadership in the management of the school through small group participation, leadership team, curriculum meetings, topical AdHOC committees, and grade level teams mentoring younger teachers.

Instructional leadership is the joint responsibility of the faculty and administration at Eastridge. Curriculum committees, AdHOC task forces, and grade-level teams serve as the vehicles for articulating curriculum, instruction and reform initiatives, i.e. the curriculum guide review, report card revision and spelling program. These independent and interdependent groups are charged with carrying out specific planning and implementing best practices to achieve and promote the school vision of a “Helping Relationship”. Every committee has a representative from each team. The committee selects a chairperson who collaboratively sets the agenda, schedules meetings, facilitates group processes, set goals, coordinates implementation strategies and determines evaluation decisions. Committees include master calendar, spelling, curriculum alignment and review, gifted and talented, leadership, media/technology, and testing.

Committees are charged with presenting a budget plan to implement their goals. To ensure that policies, programs, relationships and resources focus on the achievement of the schools vision/mission and promote learning; decisions are cycled through faculty, leadership, accountability, PTCO and individual feedback. Throughout this process, it is the expectation that the “Helping Relationship” is integral to the decision, student achievement is a priority, parental involvement has been solicited,

sufficient monetary support is provided, and that the faculty has consensus about the final product. Examples include prioritization of budget allocation, staff design, back to school night format, parent education programs, implementation of the Bully Proofing program, Immersion, Honors, and allocation of technology into the classroom.

**F2. How does the school engage its internal and external stakeholders in leadership and decision making? What is the relationship between the principal and stakeholders?**

The organization of Eastridge and the fundamental responsibility for establishing a quality school lies with the principal, in collaboration with the faculty and parents. Dr. Villarreal's role is to effectively integrate and coordinate instruction, administration and day-to-day operations toward fulfilling established goals, and to do so in a manner that is sensitive to the individual needs of students, parents and staff. Staff and parents have participated in determining grade level configurations, teacher assignments, student reporting system, and marshalling effective instructional resources.

Dr. Villarreal and Ms. Moore, the assistant principal, ensure stakeholder voice by advocating and practicing an open-door policy, "Managing by Walking Around", attending grade level meetings, surveying staff and community and expecting faculty to generate faculty and leadership agendas.

Long-range goals are collaboratively developed, monitored and reviewed by the parents throughout the year via the EAAC, PTCO, leadership team and faculty to develop and prioritize school goals. Stakeholders analyze, review, and make recommendations for school priorities based on community surveys, benchmarking national best practices, i.e. Reading Recovery, Test Best, parental involvement, staff development, assessment data, demographic trends, budget priorities, scheduling needs, and effective year round practices.

**F3. What kind of participatory school improvement process operates at your school? How did your school prepare its Self-Assessment for the Blue Ribbon Schools Program and how did this initiative relate to the school improvement and planning efforts?**

To insure a participative school improvement process, faculty and parents serve and collaborate on committees charged with researching and recommending best practices. The school improvement process begins with an accountability committee that includes parents, teachers and community members. School improvement focuses on three goals: student achievement, attendance and graduation rates. The committee identifies specific goals and strategies, evaluates performance on an ongoing basis and regularly reports progress to parents and the community. Goals not achieved are revisited, discussed, revised and implemented the following year.

The decision to pursue the Blue Ribbon Award began with the faculty. We researched and discussed Blue Ribbon Award criteria in 1993. The faculty strongly recommended submitting an application. Parental feedback strongly supported the faculty's recommendation. The process for completing the application included posting questions in the hallway for teacher and parent feedback; faculty brainstorming answers to each question, parent surveys; student feedback; involving individual teachers and teams of teachers in the drafting, reviewing and revising the application.

Although Eastridge did not receive a national site visit, Blue Ribbon feedback provided and identified specific areas of strength and weakness. Areas scored as adequate or strong became the focal point for school improvement:

- Strengthening the scope and sequence for science and social studies and how they are integrated with the curriculum.
- Articulating with the faculty and community the specific expectations required of students.
- Articulating a discipline policy that discourages violence and encourages students to behave in an orderly fashion.
- Clarified and completed an assets mapping chart to determine major educational challenges the school will face in the next five years.
- Making a concerted effort to provide educational resources in the community to extend learning opportunities.

**F4. How does your school leadership use the most current information about education to promote continuous improvement in your school? How does such evidence influence decision-making?**

Dr. Villarreal commits himself to the concept of being a continuous learner. He advocates the Japanese concept of Kaizen – “the process of continuous organizational improvement”. To model his commitment, Dr. V. has participated in major professional growth experiences: Harvard’s Principal Center where he studied and advocated the use of the Jon Saphier’s Skillful Teacher as the instructional model for Eastridge (See D1). He attended Jeff Howard’s Efficacy Institute and guided the faculty toward the concept that their teaching efforts will and do impact student learning for all children; he attended Patrick Dolan’s “Restructuring Our Schools” which advocates redesigning an educational system that places responsibility for quality where it belongs-with those who do the work – then personnel help to create the vision, the goals, the measures that are relevant to them. Thus a “horizontal organizational model” and participative management was implemented.

Dr. Villarreal’s recent trip to China as a member of a National Educational Administrators delegation served as the impetus for setting educational standards at Eastridge that enable children to compete globally. Dr. Villarreal’s participation in numerous reading conferences (National Reading Recovery Conference) Jan Richardson’s Effective Literacy Conference; Luci Caulkins Writing Process Conference educated him about effective reading instruction. This knowledge about effective literacy practices redefined reading instruction at Eastridge. Attendance at the National Association of Elementary Principals, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development Conference, National Library Power Conference, national multicultural conference, and regional math conferences; heightened his understanding and awareness that professional development is the lynch pin for improving student achievement. Further, Dr. Villarreal HAS INCLUDED Eastridge faculty numerous speaking engagements at state, regional and national conferences.

Dr. Villarreal’s aggressive participation in professional development and his subsequent sharing of information with faculty serves to motivate and excite teachers to pursue their own professional development. Decision making at Eastridge is therefore impacted in a positive and effective manner because the faculty is influenced by research based information when decisions are made regarding curriculum, instruction and management of the school.

Research findings from “In Search of Excellence” (a district study of benchmark districts in America), Educational Research Network Best Practices, Reading Recovery research, MidContinental Regional Educational Evaluation Laboratory on special education, effective classroom practices, multicultural education, effective schools have prompted Dr. Villarreal to lead the faculty in making paradigm shifts that would ultimately impact student achievement.

For example, knowledge gained from special education research indicated that special education students should move toward an inclusive rather than pullout model at Eastridge. This practice promotes greater self-esteem, provides positive role models and special education teachers become integral partners with their regular classroom colleagues. The In Search of Excellence report led Dr. Villarreal to advocate for an English as a Second Language program within the school and to marshal additional resources and monies for students who are at-risk. Reading Recovery research led Dr. Villarreal to promote staff development to implement effective reading strategies for all grades. Eastridge student achievement data indicated that reading instruction be a focal point for school improvement. The Educational Research Network Publication on gifted students and national and building data on gifted student achievement served as the impetus for Dr. Villarreal reallocating building FTE for advanced placement courses, grades 2 through 5. Data indicated that this cohort of children was not achieving at the level commensurate with their ability.

**F5. As you look back over the last five years, what conditions or changes have contributed most to the overall success of your school?**

Our overall success in the past five years is rooted in empowering the faculty to make decisions about the administration and management of Eastridge. Faculty empowerment has created an atmosphere of professionalism, collegiality, collaboration and risk taking. Eastridge teachers perceive



themselves as leaders. Leaders in understanding, implementing and coaching the practices related to curriculum development, reading instruction, inclusive special education practices, looping, multicultural education, and library/media collaboration. The Eastridge faculty is considered to be at the forefront of effective reading practices. Unequivocally the major change that effected student achievement at Eastridge was the retooling of assessment practices. These new practices trained teachers to be accurate diagnosticians for reading. Teachers have become adept at identifying and prescribing specific interventions and instructions to the individualized needs of every student.

A change in the human culture of our school that advocated a “Helping Relationship” was the catalyst for collegiality and unconditional support for one another. Faculty depends on each other and unselfishly shares time, expertise and resources; and believe in the efficacy of their contributions. The “Helping Relationship” culture has become embedded in all facets of our organization.

Another change in our philosophy was a shift to open communications with parents. We view parents as essential partners in the educational process and work to encourage their active interest and involvement. Teachers provide weekly class newsletters, and a school newsletter is published every third week. Parents serve as chairpersons for the building accountability committee. Parent-teacher conferences were extended into the weekends and evenings to accommodate single and working parents.

**F6. What is your vision for integrating technology into your school, including benchmarks that guide your plans, problems that must be overcome, and training approaches. To what extent and how is technology used to improve management efficiency and effectiveness?**

The goal of the technology program at Eastridge is to provide teachers and students with the tools to be successful now and as we move into the next century. The media and technology specialists regularly meet with classroom teachers every “track-on” Monday to plan ways to infuse technology into the curriculum being taught. The specialists work closely with both teachers and students to provide training and support for curriculum units. For example, fourth grade students studied endangered animals. The media and technology specialists met with teachers to infuse multimedia technology in a research project that the students were required to complete. This project enabled students to incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and art while learning about the species of animals. The students also received training on using electronic research and creating multimedia presentations on the computer. The students shared their presentations with classmates and parents during parent/teacher conferences.

In addition to the technology in the classroom that is used daily, students in grades one through four attend a 45-minute technology session every third day. While in technology lab, students complete work on an “electronic portfolio”, which includes samples of work the students have completed in their classroom. These portfolios are presented to parents at conferences. Students also reinforce language arts, math, social studies and keyboarding skills with “best practices” software.

The media and technology specialists provide staff development that is tailored to each teacher’s personal needs. Classes are offered for credit after school or during the school day (during the teacher’s planning time) for informal training sessions on specific software applications. Classes have included: Internet training, spreadsheet and database training to improve classroom management, the WiggleWorks reading program, Hyperstudio and Kid Pix Studio for multimedia presentations. All teachers have received training on the Internet. Fifteen teachers currently attend a monthly study group for in-depth exploration of software programs available at Eastridge as it relates to their teaching needs.

Teachers and administrators use technology to manage and analyze Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Levels test results and to determine progress on the Eastridge improvement goals, reading proficiency, and math facts. Administration, teachers and the parent accountability committee access school data for developing school improvement goals. For example, we monitor individual and grade level mastery of math facts grades 1-5. Technology assists us in tracking student mastery of the spelling core word lists. Technology also manages student proficiency levels, grades and attendance via electronic report cards.

**F7. What do you consider the major educational challenges your school must face over the next five years, and how do you plan to address them?**

Challenges that Eastridge will face over the next five years must begin with maintaining the energy, enthusiasm, esprit de corps, and knowledge of educational pedagogy of an expert faculty. This must be accomplished while confronting social issues such as an increasing student mobility rate, economic factors that impact a child's health, safety, nutrition and readiness to learn, and an increasing population of students who do not speak English. Other future challenges include the rapid advance in knowledge and technology, abundance of resources, and increasing number of children who exhibit anti-social behaviors and disrupt the learning of their peers. The concept that "it takes a village" to educate a child accentuates the necessity that Eastridge and community agencies come under one umbrella to assume the challenges children bring to the classroom.

To maintain the esprit de corps, morale, and satisfaction of our dedicated faculty, we must continue to foster a human culture that is warm, nurturing, empathetic, and sensitive to the personal as well as the professional aspects of teaching. The principle of the "Helping Relationship" is the vision and the power that will carry the faculty forward. The "Helping Relationship" will guide us as we strive to maintain the values that we cherish about how children should be educated.

The decisions made by our faculty are based on what's best for students! This over-riding philosophy creates an excitement about teaching, inspiring our faculty to investigate new strategies for working with groups of diverse learners. Staff development opportunities are valued and sought after, and the excitement fostered through new learning is contagious.

Our Immersion program (see C3) has helped to ease the transition for new students entering the classroom. Our ESL program must include families in the acculturation process. Profits from our private enterprise program, ECP, must increasingly be directed towards supporting the economic challenges that our children must live with. Profits can be directed towards providing reduced child care fees for families in need within our community, providing extended health services beyond the school day such as a community health resource center on site. Our mental health services team must expand services to include the whole family.

The explosion of information and resources and the rapidity of how we can access this wealth of knowledge demands that we train our children to think critically to evaluate resources, and be effective users of information. When students become intrinsically motivated, it results in a higher sense of self-esteem and self-confidence.

## **G. SCHOOL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

**G1. What are the goals and priorities of your school, family, and community partnerships? How have your school and community both improved as a result of these partnerships and how did you measure the improvements?**

The goal and first priority within and outside Eastridge is to strengthen the practices of the "Helping Relationship". It requires a school community partnership to ensure that children are inspired to think, to learn, to achieve, and to care. The Eastridge parent accountability committee and PTCO deliberately acknowledge the demonstration of the "Helping Relationship". It is a requirement that parents are involved in supporting their children in achieving academic goals. Goal attainment includes partnerships with colleges/universities, businesses, and volunteer groups. A survey distributed in the spring of 1998 indicated that 96% of family members embraced a relationship where parents are involved in their child's school and their academic success. Senior volunteers have become integral in reaching our goals and priorities. They serve as mentors, coaches, tutors, and help to reduce pupil-teacher ratios. Senior volunteers return each year indicating a sense of belonging on their part.

Specific examples of school, family and community partnership include:

- Partnerships with universities such as Denver University, Metropolitan State College, University of Colorado at Denver, and Colorado State University provide Eastridge with 20 or more interns a year. Interns assist teachers in individualizing instruction, and develop their professional knowledge and skills by working with experts in the field.
- An alliance with the Public Education and Business Coalition has assisted Eastridge in its reform efforts, including restructuring the media center facility and its program. The PEBC facilitated

institutionalizing the concept of teacher-media specialist collaboration. A continuing PEBC partnership is a three-year writing project with Eastridge teachers.

- Partnerships with AT & T, Allstate Insurance and businesses owned by parents have provided cash and in-kind support to our school (educational supplies, materials and volunteer manpower to develop our Outdoor classroom, small mini-projects in classrooms i.e. reading lofts and tepees).
- Cub Scout groups, Municipal Park and Recreation Organizations, civic organizations and businesses regularly use our facilities and support the school.
- Parent partnerships (see G2) are the sine qua non of our ability to reach our goals and priorities.
- Cub Scout group mulches the landscaping every year with donated wood chips from a tree and lawn care company. Cub Scouts used as greeters and guides at some school functions.
- Local businesses donated goods and in-kind services for school fundraising auctions.

Our single-minded goal is that teacher efficacy will provide students with the tools needed to experience success in a global society, regardless of their intellectual ability, social-economic background or ethnicity.

## **G2. How does the school involve families in their children's education?**

Parent involvement is the heartbeat of the "Helping Relationship". The Eastridge faculty fervently believes that active solicitation of parent involvement is paramount to the success of each child. Eastridge regularly engages parents in activities that support and promote all five of the parental involvement activities. Specific examples include:

- Supporting and enhancing the parenting role by providing registrations fee for parenting/involvement workshops; providing book bags for home so that parents without home libraries have the means to read each night with their children; issuing library cards to parents for them to check out books from the parenting section or check out favorite children's books; providing complimentary magazine regarding the role of the parent
- Ensuring effective two-way communication via Friday folders sent each week with pertinent information regarding student academic and behavioral performance and requiring parents to sign, react to the content, and return the next school day; accommodate parent schedule by providing parent-teacher conferences in the evening and on Saturdays; providing teachers personal home phone numbers for parents to access outside school hours to ask questions and share concerns; schedule informal conferences at the parent's request; teachers frequently call parents before concerns arise and or to share student success stories; schedule informal conferences at the parent's request; translators are provided when necessary for language minority families
- Recruiting and encouraging volunteers through active solicitation by the PTCO. Parent volunteers and "room moms" volunteer for field trips, assisting in the classroom, reading with and to children and being special guests to share hobbies, interests and talents.
- Empowering parents to extend learning at home by providing parent education nights regarding proficiencies implementation, state standards requirements, effective home literacy practices, ideas for writing at home; providing book bags and higher order thinking questions for parents to ask after reading with their child, encouraging children to check out alpha smart mini computers for parents to assist children in word processing; providing the Eastridge Curriculum Guide to parents to familiarize them with the skills and objectives taught in each subject at each grade; assigning regular homework that requires parental involvement i.e. asking students questions, and discussing issues with parents.
- Involving parents in decision making via: parent/teacher conferences where parents have opportunity to give feedback regarding the education of their children; EAAC; administering surveys to obtain information that can be analyzed and used for school improvement.
- Maintaining an "open-door" policy so parents feel welcome to visit, ask questions, make suggestions and/ or share concerns with administration and faculty.

## **G3. How does the school support the needs and concerns of families?**

Our aggressive “Open-door” policy and behaviors that demonstrate a “Helping Relationship” serve as the foundation for encouraging parents to become active partners with teachers. At Eastridge we frequently ask, “What more can we do to assist, help and serve our families?” Dr. Villarreal sets the tone for identifying parental needs and concerns via a video presented at Back to School night. Dr. V. clearly articulates the schools role as a community resource. He identifies all the individuals on staff that are ready to help parents. Social activities are scheduled throughout the year, which enable teachers, administrators, and parents to interact socially and develop personal relationships. The development of personal relationships is the entrée for encouraging parents to engage in personal conversations. Through these conversations parents are asked about needs they may have. Parents are formally surveyed annually regarding specific needs. Mental health services personnel teams with teachers during parent-teacher conferences so that family concerns, which affect the child at school, can be approached and discussed. Formal “care and concern” meetings focus attention on children that are struggling either academically or personally. From these discussions, formal and informal contacts with parents are initiated to assess how the school can provide assistance. A component of the formal special education staffing process includes a social history. The social history attempts to identify family stressors, dynamics and needs that affect the child’s academics. The PTCO is responsive to familial needs and provides crisis intervention services. A frequently asked question is “What are the needs in the community and how can we be proactive in meeting those needs?” A site funded community school liaison is directly responsible for organizing and coordinating school efforts to support families in need and coordinate connections with social agencies and businesses that help to support families. The liaison’s personal contact with parents creates a personal bonding with families. Every new parent and child is given a personal tour of the Eastridge facility. During the tour, our school contact is asking questions about family needs and reporting those needs to the appropriate school personnel. When new families enroll their children, the family-community liaison sends a personal invitation asking parents to visit with the assistant principal and her. Academic and behavioral standards are shared and discussed. The school frequently calls the previous school to inquire about services the child has received. Our immersion program is charged with identifying any familial needs of new students.

- An excellent on-site childcare (6:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.) accommodates the needs of working parents.
- Off-track enrichment classes help students reinforce, improve and extend academic skills.
- A full-time social worker and full time school psychologist assist parents in accessing community services, recommend counseling services, provide interventions to resolve family crises, and make home visit when requested or necessary.
- A school nurse is available to parents for general medical questions, nutritional advice and immunization information.

#### **G4. How are educational resources in the school and the community used to extend learning opportunities for students, teachers, and families?**

The Denver metropolitan urban area is rich in educational resources. Field trips into the community, small group visitations to local public libraries, the Denver Art Museum, the Denver Museum of Natural History, the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, the Colorado Ballet and Opera Colorado extend and enrich social studies, science, language arts, and the fine arts curriculum. Fourth and fifth grade students experience the Central City Opera through an expedition to this historic happening. After these trips, the students wrote and performed an opera. The symphony field trip followed a comprehensive study of various symphonic instruments. A tour of the City of Denver culminated a third grade cities unit. A Plains Conservation field trip extended a science unit on habitats. Bowling and ski trips extended PE units on lifetime sports. Nature field trips to local parks provided hands on learning for living and non-living first grade units. The PTCO sponsors events of special interests to the students such a children’s authors, wildlife researchers, etc.

School facilities are extended to the community for parks and recreation programs. Further, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, homeowners association meetings, and church groups have after hours access to building facilities. Athletic teams regularly use athletic fields, cheerleading groups utilize our cafeteria

for practices, after school foreign language groups use classrooms for instruction, and district meetings frequently are held at Eastridge.

## **H. INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**

### **H1. What is your school's overall approach to assessment? How do your methods align with your educational vision/mission and curriculum? What questions about assessment is your school currently addressing?**

The teaching/learning cycle (assessment, evaluation of assessment, planning and instruction) guides assessment practices. Comprehensive assessment data on every child ensures the mission that every student will be “inspired to think, to learn, to achieve, to care”. Inspiration to learn is facilitated because children are taught at their instructional level. The Eastridge faculty considers:

- Are our assessments effectively evaluating instructional strategies?
- Are our assessments providing an accurate profile of what children are achieving?
- Are assessments aligned with the curriculum?
- Do assessments validate and confirm teacher perception of student needs?
- Are assessments student friendly?
- Are assessments communicated and understood by parents?
- Do assessments provide comprehensive insight into the child's learning?

As a result of these questions, the faculty has participated in numerous study groups that analyzed:

- The language in the proficiencies and state standards,
- A common vocabulary among the faculty regarding assessments,
- Grade level rubrics that corresponded with the proficiencies,
- Anchor papers were identified to ensure the consistency of evaluation among teachers,

The faculty administers a battery of diagnostic assessments with corresponding rubrics to determine individualized instructional objectives, and to determine a student's proficiency level (basic, proficient or advanced) for language arts, mathematics, science, and reading. Multiple validations are used:

- Students are assessed individually for reading ability using Running Records, DRA (primary) Qualitative Reading Inventories II.
- K - Developmentally Appropriate Practices, observation surveys, journaling, and teacher made pre and posttests in math determine the developmental capability of kindergartners.
- Grade 1 -2 Running records, QRI IIs, DRA's assess the reading proficiency.
- Grade 3 administers ITBS, district tests, and CoGat standardized tests
- Grade 4 administers ITBS, the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Levels tests, and district science assessment
- Grade 5 administers Levels Tests and science assessments
- Other required assessments at Eastridge include student performance, authentic tasks, written explanations in all curricular areas, anecdotal records, science projects, student led conferences, presentations, book reports and research projects.
- Colorado Student Assessment Program in reading and writing determines the students' proficiency on state standards.

Current school issues impacting the assessment practices at Eastridge are:

- **Student mobility** and its concomitant history of low achievement. This inspired the creation of the “Immersion Program” (C3).
- **Determining the entry-level literacy skills of kindergarten children – particularly those who were not enrolled in a preschool program.** This concern was addressed by participation in a district kindergarten study group whose charge was to collect, analyze, and select assessment materials which would identify a child's literacy competencies. A teacher developed diagnostic instrument and the DRA were the result of this effort. A kindergarten enrichment program extended the school day for children in need of increased time in school.

- **How would the Eastridge faculty respond to CDE mandated literacy assessments?** Eastridge teachers participated in a three-year literacy project to improve student achievement in reading. A comprehensive study of a review of literature was completed. Effective practices and reading and writing assessments were organized for parents. Students were taught the language of assessments and required to use them in evaluating their work.
- **ITBS scores indicated that upper quartile children were not achieving at a level commensurate with their intelligence.** Eastridge implemented an advanced placement Honors Program in language arts and math for second, third, fourth and fifth graders.

## **H2. How do you use assessment results to understand and improve student and school performance? How does data influence decision-making?**

The assessment data collected from district proficiencies and state standards in the academic core teaching areas has resulted in:

- A match group analysis of results which identifies the impact on students who have been at Eastridge for one year or more has led to curriculum restructuring; adapting instruction to needs of children; and the movement from whole group instruction to small skill group instruction.
- Upper quartile student results were analyzed to determine if these children had reached and/or exceeded expected gains. Honors classes were designed to accelerate and compact curriculum.
- Ethnic group scores were analyzed and compared to their Anglo counterparts to determine any significant discrepancies. Small skill groups were organized and; children participated in special programs such as:
  - Reading recovery
  - Immersion
  - Gifted and talented
  - Title one
  - Special Ed

Test scores from students in these programs were compared to the school norms to determine program effectiveness and identify significant discrepancies. The parent accountability committee annually distributes a parent survey soliciting parent perceptions and understanding of educational programming, homework expectations, school improvement goals, home-school communications, grade level standards, and parent satisfaction. An analysis of parent feedback identifies future school priorities that are addressed to strengthen the school-community partnership. As a result, short term and long term goals are developed. For example, parents and teachers have set the following goals:

- (1) Mastery of specific math facts at grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 90% of all student academic goals.
  - (2) All first graders reading at grade level by the end of first grade,
  - (3) All children reading a minimum of 20 minutes each evening (85% parent support 1997),
- Results from the district math and reading levels tests led to a focused attention to teaching specific curricular units (algebra, statistics, geometry, expository and writing at all grade levels,
  - Analysis of building test data led to the purchase of additional (a) technology materials (software, list), (b) Write Source materials for grades K-5. (c) The development and implementation of a research based spelling program.
  - Analysis of building data led to a school-wide implementation of a grade 1-5 spelling program, grade 1-5 common language for reading and writing, the teaching of effective reading strategies at grade K-5, and a common process and language for writing. Input from parents, the PTCO, the parent accountability committee and feedback from an annual parent survey resulted in the development and implementation of an Honors level math and language arts class.

Weekly grade level, department, and faculty meetings are other vehicles for evaluating assessment data. Outcomes of these discussions in the past year are: the implementation of a building wide spelling program in which students are held accountable for mastering 750 of the most frequently missed spelling words and mastery of specific word patterns at each grade level; the development of grade level content standards and performance assessments in each academic core area; the development of grade level test taking strategies; and a focus on quality time for effecting student achievement.

**H3. What assessment data are communicated to students, parents, and the community? What is the purpose of these communications? How does the school ensure that these stakeholders understand the standards for judgement and the meaning of the data?**

Assessment at Eastridge drives instruction. It is critical that faculty, parents and students understand data. Therefore concerted efforts are made by faculty and administration to communicate information regarding assessment data for each child and the school as a whole. These efforts include:

- Sharing ITBS student, class and school profiles
- Sending home quarterly student report cards
- Distributing district Levels Tests for mathematics and reading
- Conducting parent surveys to be analyzed and shared with PTCO and EAAC. Specific questions regarding assessment are included
- Providing weekly spelling results
- Sharing Cognitive Abilities Tests Scores with parents (CoGat)
- Sharing and discussing the newly implemented Colorado Standards Achievement Program for reading and mathematics with individual parents and at PTCO and EAAC meetings
- Parent teacher conferences are used to explain and answer questions regarding individual assessment data (formal and informal)

The purpose for communicating assessment data is to provide stakeholders with specific information regarding growth and progress of individual children, classrooms and the building profile. By informing and empowering parents, they become advocates and partners for their children and Eastridge. This strengthens parents' belief in the efficacy at Eastridge. As a result of cementing the bond between school and home through open communication, parents are encouraged and motivated to invest their time and energy in the efforts of their children and Eastridge that in turn accelerates student achievement. Lastly, parents, students and the school are intertwined in holding students accountable for growth and progress. Eastridge ensures that stakeholders understand the standards for judgment and the meaning of the data by:

- Distributing a district stakeholder's report
- Publishing and distributing an annual accountability report
- Providing newsletter articles informing stakeholders of results
- Allocating time at parent-teacher conferences to inform parents of students and school results
- Holding PTCO and EAAC meetings specifically to discuss results and meaning of test scores.
- Holding evening meetings for grade level parents to be educated about test scores and proficiency language. Free books for children are used to entice parents to attend.

Our ultimate goal is to have parents involved, interested, and active in the business of the school. Further, parents and students must know what the criteria for success are because that knowledge guides the way they focus their attention and effort.

**H4. What standardized tests (norm-referenced) developed on the national, state, or district level has your school given in the last five years? What are the results for the last five years?**

Eastridge test scores demonstrate that we are an effective school. In spite of a high mobility rate (average 40% over the previous three years), the school has maintained above average test scores. Special education students (speech language, learning disabled) and students who may have enrolled as late as one week prior to administering tests are required to take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Their scores are included in building averages. In the past three years, new students on the average have scored more than 12% lower than students who began the school year. While we welcome new students, arguably their participation in ITBS significantly lowers the Eastridge average percentages or standard scores. However, we believe that all students can achieve at high levels. Identified severe language and learning disabilities students are exempt from taking the ITBS if their handicapping area corresponds to tested categories.

The Cherry Creek School District published test scores using only percentiles for two of the past five years. Consequently, we are presenting three years of data in standard scores per Colorado Blue Ribbon

liaison feedback. Had the Blue Ribbon Application requested percentile scores, a 20% increase over the last five years would have been observed. (See attached for most recent three years of data presented in standard scores).

Please note that only in the last two years has the Eastridge African American population exceeded 15%. Rather, our total number of diverse ethnic backgrounds equals the current 37%. As a result, extensive longitudinal data that tracks students is not available. Further, to disaggregate data of ethnic/racial groups at Eastridge is only a snapshot of the actual achievement of these cohort groups. A more accurate picture is revealed through a matched group analysis and pre and post summative data analysis. Listed below are three programs that serve to close the gap between subgroups. An analysis of their effect on student achievement is noteworthy. African American student growth for school year 1997-98 is reflected in the following.

- The Immersion Program – The average growth was 1.9 grade levels in reading comprehension as measured by an individual Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-II). Students in this program also demonstrated a 40% gain in math facts mastery.
- Reading Recovery – During a 16 week period, the average growth was 11 levels as measured by Reading Recovery leveled book standards. It is also noteworthy that 5 of 20 of these children were later identified as special education needs students.
- Title I – Last year, African American students grew by 2.6 grade levels in reading as measured by individualized Qualitative Reading Inventories (QRI-II).

Although the above mentioned programs indicate significant growth on the part of African American population, it must be noted that only seven students in the tested grades were identified as having remained at Eastridge for more than one school year. Match group analysis indicates that students who remain at Eastridge for more than one year demonstrate as much as a 20% gain in reading.

The African American population at Eastridge is 19%. The majority of our African American population resides in a Section 8 government subsidized apartment complex that limits residency to one year. Therefore, it is impossible to track the 19% of the Eastridge African American population. In reality, less than one percent can be tracked through a matched group analysis. Formative and summative data for these students demonstrates instructional effectiveness for children who are at Eastridge for less than one year.

##### **H5. What nonstandardized (criterion-referenced) or alternative assessments of student performance do you use? What are the results for the last five years?**

As indicated in H1, Eastridge uses multiple validations to determine student proficiency levels. Alternative assessments are a critical component of bodies of evidence which substantiate student ratings. While Eastridge administers nonstandardized assessments, the long-range plan for our district has been in flux over the past two years, thereby making five years of data unavailable. District Achievement Levels tests (ALT) was initially required for third, fourth and fifth grade students. The ALT measures components of reading and math curricular objectives and provides standardized data for assigning proficiency status specific to Cherry Creek School District and Eastridge. The ALT provides teachers, students, and parents with accurate assessment of student progress in mastering the skills of reading and mathematics. Teachers use this assessment information for instructional planning for individual students or an entire class. The ALT also provides a measure with which we can chart student mastery of certain district objectives.

As a result of the implementation of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (in its first year of administration following a baseline data run) and the need to administer multiple assessments, Eastridge, in alignment with the district, moved to administering the ALT test to exiting fifth graders only.



The following information from the past three years is available and attached. Minority subgroup data was not included in district subgroups.

DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE LEVELS TEST (ALT)										
Grade 5										
FALL 1995 (116Students-97%)										
Math Aver	Numb. Relation	Geom.	Stat Prob.	Pattern	Algebra	Read Aver	Word Mean	Literal Comp.	Interp Comp.	Eval Comp.
208	204	209	209	212	209	207	205	208	208	209
FALL 1996 (107 Students-97%)										
204	200	206	206	207	204	206	206	205	207	207
SPRING 1997 (102 Students-96%)										
215	213	216	217	215		214	211	214	215	216

**H6. What was your school's record for the past five years in the following areas that may serve as quantitative indicators of school climate and engagement.**

**Daily student attendance**

97-98 (95.5%) 96-97 (95.5%) 95-96 (97%) 94-95 (97%) 93-94 (97%)

**Daily teacher attendance**

97-98 (99%) 96-97 (99.6%) 95-96 (99.5%) 94-95 (99.6%) 93-94 (99.7%)

**Teacher turnover rate**

97-98 (.05%) 96-97 (.04%) 95-96 (.05%) 94-95 (.04%) 93-94 (.04%)

**H7. Which awards received by your school, staff, or students are indicative of school success?**

- In 1998, Eastridge was selected as the recipient of the Colorado Council for International Reading Association's *Exemplary Ready Program of the Year*. Eastridge was the first recipient of this most prestigious award in the Cherry Creek School District.
- 1998-99, Mrs. Sharon Ivie, fourth grade teacher, is one of three finalist for the Colorado Teacher of the Year. The recipient will be announced after submission of Blue Ribbon Application.
- Dr. Robert D. Villarreal, Principal, was the recipient of the 1996 Milken Family Foundation National Award for Outstanding Educators.
- In 1996, Eastridge was selected as the Colorado Conservation School of the Year; received a DeWitt Wallace Library Power Grant; and was a national finalist for the Library Media Program of the year (the American Association of School Librarians).
- Mrs. Cheri Boord, Title I teacher, was nominated for the Who's Who Among American Teachers
- Mrs. Katrina Alexander and Mrs. Amanda Swartley have written and published a locally acclaimed reading book entitled A Little Literacy

## **Part VI – Special Emphasis Areas (Optional)**

The arts are an integral part of the life at Eastridge and are strongly supported by the administration and faculty, who recognize that training in music, dance, poetry, and the visual arts fosters a lifelong involvement and appreciation, for diverse thinking and individual expression. Teaching practices at Eastridge support current research linking arts education with brain development and progress for learning in reading and math.

Full-time specialists in art, music, and physical education meet on a rotating schedule with all students, kindergarten through fifth grade, including special education staffed and ESL students. The Eastridge curriculum is guided by the Colorado State Standards and the Cherry Creek School District proficiencies for music and art, which are defined by sequential grade-level benchmarks. These benchmarks facilitate student's progress along a continuum from basic to proficient to advanced.

The administration supports professional development of the music and art teachers by providing substitute teachers and fee reimbursement for workshops and professional meetings.

Units of study in music at Eastridge include piano, recorder, Orff tone bars, hand chimes, multicultural drums, dance movement, classical music and opera, and solo and ensemble vocal training. Learning packets for piano, recorder, and tone bars are designed by the music teacher to encourage students to progress independently. The instructional material is in constant revision based on student achievement as measured during performance. Students are guided to judge performances using a class-constructed rubric scale. The principal avidly supports student performances at school assemblies, district-wide events, and community functions.

Parents are invited to the music classroom to aid in instruction, observe, and occasionally to perform for students. Extra instructional and practice time is offered to students before and after school on a voluntary basis, and transportation home is sometimes provided by the music teacher for those students who could not otherwise participate.

Drama and speech instruction are provided to enhance student performances in musical plays and operas, such as "The Sound of Music", "Mary Poppins", "La Cenerentola", "Hansel and Gretel", "Carmen", "Aida", and "The Magic Flute". Other performances are curriculum related, included D.A.R.E., American History, Native American History and culture, and environmental and social issues. In the Spring of 1999 the music, instrumental and dance focus will be multicultural with multiple performances entitled "Celebrate Our Cultures!"

Experiences in Japanese, Mexican, Hawaiian, Native American and Australian music compliment first, second, and third grade curriculum. Literature is incorporated often, and books are displayed throughout the music room. The piano packet for third grade is entitled, "Music is Reading". Rhythm reading exercises for all grades reinforce left-to-right progression and hand-eye coordination.

The Eastridge Choir and extra-curricular activity offered to third, fourth, and fifth graders meets every Tuesday and Thursday mornings before school. They perform for various school, district, and community occasions. Instrumental instruction in band and strings is also offered before school on Mondays and Wednesdays on a fee basis to third, fourth, and fifth graders.

Activities within the framework of arts instruction include field trips to the Denver Art Museum, Museum of Outdoor Arts, Cherry Creek District Art Shows, Central City Opera, Opera Colorado

Workshops, Opera Colorado performances, and Colorado Symphony. The administration contributes funds for transportation, student ticket cost, and substitute teachers. Staff, administration, and parents enthusiastically attend field trips.

In-school programs have included visiting artists, dance companies, theatre groups, authors, opera companies, and jazz and classical musicians, funded by the PTCO and administration. In addition, examples of classical and folk art are displayed throughout the school, including a 28 foot original mural by Hispanic artist Manuel Martinez that is the focal point of the school cafeteria.

## **J1. Arts Education**

- a. **Curriculum and Instruction:** (1 & 2) Units in art are often integrated with areas of study in classrooms. Two examples follow:
- Much of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade art curriculum focuses on Native American Arts with an emphasis on traditional southwestern cultures.
  - First grade study of Japan includes exploration of several traditional Japanese art forms such as brush painting and textile design.

Many other collaborative efforts with classroom teachers occur throughout the school year.

The art production component of the program gives students an opportunity to explore a wide variety of art materials and techniques and include drawing, sculpture, painting, printmaking, clay work and textiles.

Our commitment is to provide opportunities for Eastridge students to:

- Develop an awareness of creative potential for expression through the visual arts.
  - Gain knowledge and understanding of art heritage and history.
  - Increase perceptual awareness and responses to visual art forms.
  - Explore and appreciate the interrelationship of societies, cultures and the work of artists through the world.
- b. **Commitment and School Environment:** 1) the art specialist participates in professional training, and financial support is given in the form of sub days to attend state and national art education conferences. Ms. Altberg, art specialist, has a Master's Degree in art education. 2) Students receive art instruction in 45-minute blocks of time on a 10 or 15 day rotation. The art room is self-contained and equipped with appropriate student facilities to teach a wide variety of art forms. It also has a laser video disc player, VCR, TV monitor, and slide projector. We have excellent resources at Eastridge and from the district resource center. 3) Family Art Nights give students and parents an opportunity to explore the visual arts together. Students teach some of the skills they have acquired. Parents also provide assistance to classes and help with various jobs in the art room. Students have a strong sense of ownership and are aware of the need to care for equipment. They are always willing to spend extra time helping with necessary tasks.
- c. **Indicators of Success:** Students are expected to produce work of high quality. Their work is exhibited throughout the school and in annual district art shows. Student artwork has been chosen for district publications. Teacher guidance and verbal and written critiques of student art work help students improve language and thinking skills as well as art skills. Twice yearly parents receive grade level summaries of visual art studies. Newly written district proficiencies and benchmarks as well as state standards provide valuable help in assessment of student and program improvement.

- d. **Partnerships:** An Eastridge parent has recently begun exhibiting our students' art work in his restaurant to provide a venue for the excellent work of our children. Trips to the Denver Art Museum for various grade levels are scheduled each year. Students have also visited the Museum of Outdoor Arts and participated in workshops. Children also visit artist' studios. Each year families participate in the annual District Youth Arts Month show and celebrations at a local shopping mall as well as two other district art shows. Two fourth and fifth grade classes participated in Paintbrush Diplomacy, an international student art and writing exchange through the International Children's Art Museum in San Francisco. Our student art was sent to several counties, and in turn we received work from students of many cultures. Projects provide opportunities for thinking about similarities and differences in cultural around the world. A nationally recognized mural artist is currently scheduled to present a history of Central and North American mural art to provide background knowledge for a class painting to commemorate a recently deceased classmate of Hispanic heritage.